



## RESEARCH ON THE TRADITIONAL CROCHETING TECHNIQUE IN THE MOLDOVAN COSTUME

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**Abstract:** Folk songs, customs, traditions, national costumes are part of our history. They are priceless treasures that define us as nation. It is our duty to keep them sacred and pass them down from generation to generation. The work presents the results of the research of the techniques of ornamentation of handmade products, textiles, fabrics, leather and accessories from the area of Bessarabia. Special attention was paid to lace and the correlation of the crochet motifs with embroidery elements. Lace is a decorative element of the interior of the house, but also a garnishing element of the popular shirt. It is considered to be one of the oldest decoration techniques with considerable revival and appreciation in the 15th century when it is used to decorate royal and noble clothing. In the folk costume, lace is made with a crochet hook and a needle with cotton or silk thread. If the embroidery ornaments in the folk costume are in colors, then the lace is made in white. The study was carried out on the basis of the popular costume, the towels from the interwar period of the 20th century. The results of the use of information technologies in the preservation of these ornaments are also presented. The purpose of this study is to present the stages used in the identification and revitalization of the ornamentation techniques characteristic of our country, to identify the methodology of preserving the traditional ornaments used in the Republic of Moldova and to propose directions for further use.

**Key words:** ornamentation techniques, crocheting, digital library, embroidery, special software.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The national Moldovan costume is a vivid example of the unique creativity of folk craftsmen, an example of ancient customs, evidence of the deep interaction of the Moldovan ethnos with neighboring nations. [1] In the past, it was not accepted to copy the ornamental motifs from another person's costume, nor to alienate from community traditions. Each girl had to create her own festive costume, leaving the mark of local traditions and her aesthetic vision on it. The costume must correspond to the nature of the man, to harmonize with his outfit, with the color of his eyes and hair, his age and his place in society. [2] Traditionally, Moldovan national costumes were made of dense materials such as: wool, linen, hemp, cotton. The material of the suit reflected the well-being of the family. Moldavans of modest means used hemp fabrics, while the more affluent used linen or cotton. These types of textiles were made by women, under home conditions.

Specific to the folk costume is the chromatic element, characterized by sobriety and balance in the use of colors, in their harmonious combination, resulting in the achievement of tasteful coloristic effects and artistic refinement. The basic colors are: black, red, dark brown, blue, green and purple. The colors of the folk costume are characterized by harmony and freshness, the colors being combined in an aesthetic way.



The ornamentation of the Moldovan costume was directly related to the area where this people lived. Fertility of the soil, mild climate, rich harvests - everything was reflected in the ornamentation on the fabric. The ornamentation of textiles depends on several factors. The first important factor is the raw material used for beautification. The second factor is the technique of obtaining the ornaments. It is also necessary to take into account the function, thematic content or the meaning of the ornamental motifs. All these factors together make each genre of art correspond to specific decorative-artistic features. [2]

Over time, various ornamentation techniques were used in the decoration of Moldovan textiles, such as: embroidery, crocheting, weaving, artistic processing of leather and fur, etc. All of them signify certain actions, messages and events in the life of Moldovans, and throughout history they have allowed us to define ourselves as a people. Today, in the process of returning to traditional values, it is necessary to preserve and protect the diversity of ornamentation techniques, and to pass them on from generation to generation.

## **2. CROCHET TECHNIQUE IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

The museums of history and ethnography in the republic offer us a rich study material of the folk costume. The folk costume is one of the vestiges and true treasures of the nation that passes from century to century, enriches itself aesthetically and at the same time preserves its identity. Many studies are dedicated to the embroidery of the costume, the symbol and the graphics of the predominantly embroidered ornament. Covering a considerable part of the surface of the shirt, capturing attention either through the expression and aesthetics of the embroidered symbol, or through the abundance of ornamentation, or through the quite rich chromatic correlation proposed by the craftswoman, or through the refinement and delicacy of the combination of the types of embroidered stitches that in a shirt could exceed more than 5-8 sewing techniques/points [3, 4]. Embroidery is done with threads, colored beads, sequins. The embroidery thread could be made of linen, cotton, silk, wool, "stitched with wire" or metallized with gold, silver, etc. "A non-embroidered or "unstitched" shirt does not exist among the rural population of Moldova" - description made in 1817 by Francisc Graf von Karaczay. [4] The decor in the folk costume was significant and of symbolic importance.

The crocheted decorative elements are less reflected in the studies on the folk costume. Crocheted lace is used in abundance in towels, pillowcases, bed sheets, handkerchiefs, etc. All nominated products offered a decorative character to the interior of the house, with the crocheted elements placed in horizontal bands, sometimes repeated and bordered. If the embroidery, both in the popular costume and in the interior products, offered color, then we only find the lace in white, a color that was considered basic in the costume.

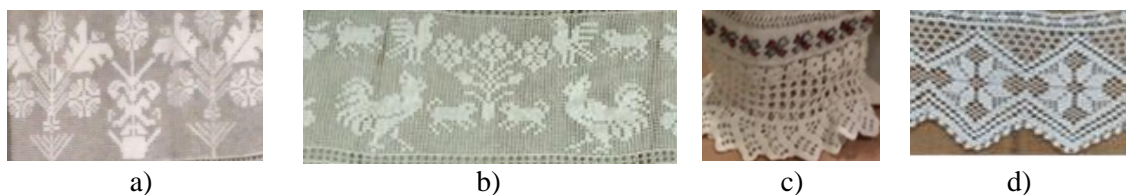
Crocheting is considered a rather archaic technique. The first accounts of lace used in clothing are attested in biblical writings. The spider's web, as well as the fisherman's web, are some of the simplest and first knots tied in a lace rhythm with a functional role in both cases. Lace is very widespread, used both in popular wear and in urban clothing. Vertiginous followers, in the use of lace in clothing and interior decoration, were the royal families and high-ranking boyars thanks to which the lace spread and evolved as a very complex and diverse aesthetic element.

Currently, hand-made lace is made using different tools such as: crochet, bobbins, simple and special needle, knitting needle, etc. tools that are mostly adapted to the techniques and contribute to the formation of the openwork aspect of the lace. But, during the period of appearance in the 15th-16th century and later, a lace was called authentic if it was made with a needle or using special devices called bobbins. Initially, the lace was made from linen threads and featured a



geometric ornament with a jagged edge that was assembled at the end of the garment. Along with the appreciation by the social strata and consequently the expansion of this decoration technique, the lace is adapted to the traditions and culture of the place where it is born. That is why today the techniques for making lace, but also lace itself, are named after the places of development and appearance. In this way we distinguish "Brussels", "Valenciennes", "Chantilly", "Argentan", "Alençon", "Tulle", Venetian lace, "Mecheln" lace, "Galich" lace, "Torzh", "Yelets", "Vologda", etc.

The problem of the popular costume is more and more frequently included in the list of various discussions, either in problems of designing a new product, or in international identification, or in product advertising with an identification and localization message, or in the search for new technological solutions, novel, aesthetically argued, processing of the clothing product. Passed through time and argued through the reinterpretation of generations, the costume and any other popular products prove to be permanently the most appropriate sources of inspiration for new approaches to contemporary products. [5, 6] In the Museums of History and Ethnography of the republic are kept samples of lace (fig.1) made by hand in the family by housewives for various ritual needs, but also for everyday use. Ornamental motifs crocheted on household products are the tree of life (fig. 1a, b), the rooster, birds and animals (fig. 1b), rhombuses, etc. [7] The lace is mainly made with a crochet hook and with quality cotton thread, but it is also made with a needle. The lace making technique is one "of the earliest forms, it was known as *Opus filatorium* or, in the Middle Ages, as *Spider Work* [8]" later 19th century Point Conte.



**Fig. 1:** Vegetal, floral, animal, geometric motifs in the lace of towels and folk costumes, museum samples, from the interwar period of the 20th century; a)- bed sheet, Ungheni, b)- bed sheet, Nisporeni, c)-the end of the shirt sleeve Ungheni, d)- towel, Nisporeni

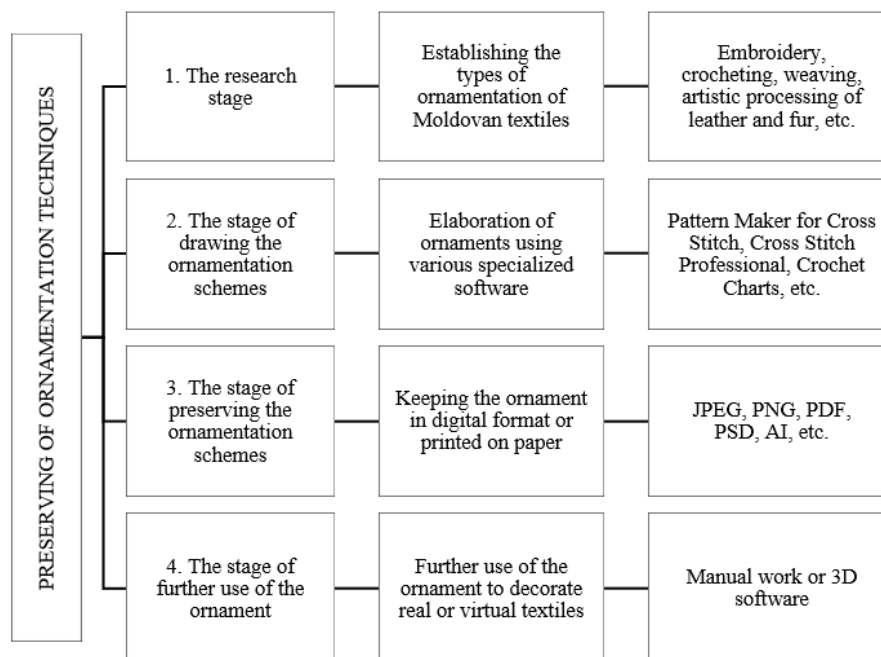
In the folk costume from the Republic of Moldova, from a decorative point of view, lace has more of a border role. It is used for the decoration of the poncho type shirt and *Ie*. The lace in the suit matched the embroidery decoration, therefore it was distinguished by the more geometric motif of the ornament and the final product endings (fig. 1c) by a jagged line, also having the role of a soft accent. It could be made with a needle or crochet in white silk or cotton threads of a special refinement in the case of the crease area „*încreeș*”. The motif of the ornament used in the lace of the shirt was a vegetable one, the rose, the basil flower, the star and many other serpentine or jagged lines framed in the rhythm of the openwork squares of the lace are frequently found. Following the analysis of several popular costumes kept in the museum archive, as well as photographs from the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, it was found that the lace ornament is not so frequent, but present and preserved in the characteristics of the ancient lace.

### 3. PRESERVING TRADITIONAL ORNAMENTS USING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

The process of preserving and transmitting ornamentation techniques is a complex one. It takes time to collect the ornamentation techniques characteristic of our people. It is also necessary to

identify and study various specialized software that will allow the archiving of these ornaments. And finally, the obtained results must be verified, in order not to transmit a erroneous information.

Figure 2 shows the stages used from the identification of the ornamentation techniques characteristic of our country to the presentation of directions for further utilization, using various specialized software.



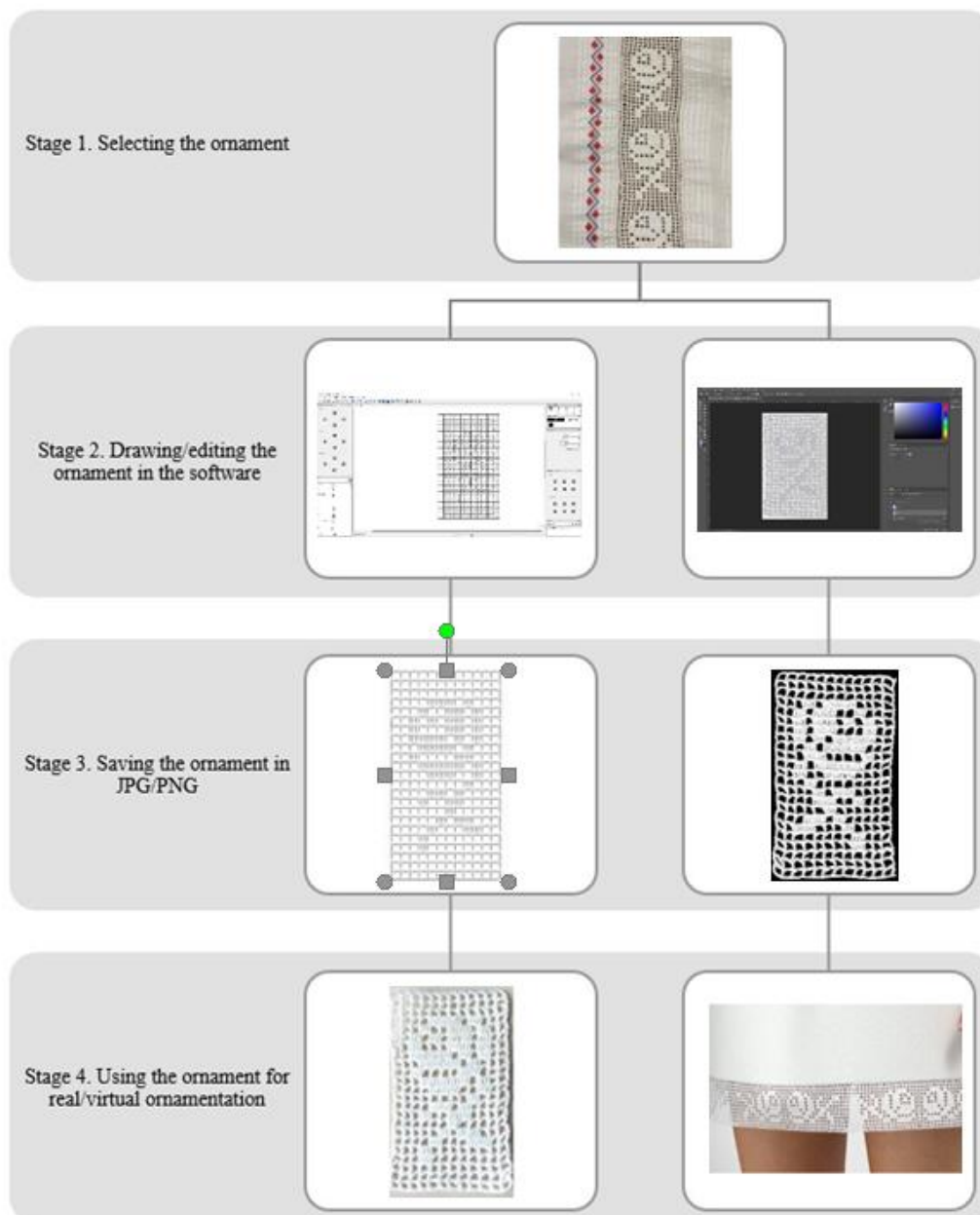
**Fig. 2:** The stages used since the preserving of ornamentation techniques

An important stage of this process is the research stage. Here, the types of ornamentation of Moldovan textiles are established. For this stage, trips were made to different museums in the country. There, we could admire various articles of clothing and textiles with different ornamentation techniques. In the second stage of this process, various specialized software is used that allow us to develop the ornaments automatically, or by successively drawing the seams. Currently, there are a large number of software, and selecting the best one depends on the ornamentation technique and the user's skills.

The stage of preserving the ornaments can be divided according to necessity. If we plan to use a technique of manual ornamentation, then the scheme must be printed on paper, which is then kept in the appropriate way. But the digital preservation method is much more secure.

In the fourth stage, further directions for the use of ornaments are proposed. Two ways of use were identified. The first way is to use the schemes in jpg format. This method can be used to decorate clothing, accessories, home textiles and other. The second way is to use schemes in png format, to create virtual collections.

Figure 3 shows an example in which all these stages can be identified.



**Fig. 3:** The working example of a crochet ornament

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The problem that this work solves consists in the analysis of the crocheting technique used in the Republic of Moldova. Also, various methods of preserving the traditional ornamentation techniques used in our country were identified and experimented. The identified stages provide the necessary information to understand the complexity of the preservation process of these techniques.

These identified stages allow us to:



- create databases with various ornaments that can be used as needed;
- diversify of the assortment of real textiles, using deciphering schemes;
- create and decorate virtual products;
- promote cultural heritage values.

After this study I noticed:

- the lace decoration is made in white colors with the help of a crochet hook or a needle in the "shabac" technique with white silk thread;
- the lace is crocheted in various motifs: vegetal, floral, geometrized, all of protective symbolic importance with decorative-artistic features specific to the geographical area and ethnic cultural space identical to the embroidery or in correlation with it. Namely: the rose, the grape vines with leaves, the rooster, rhombuses, the basil flower, the motif of the eight-pointed star, etc.
- the graphics of the ornamental elements of the lace made with the help of a crochet or a needle mainly fall into the rhythm of the 0,5x0,5 cm squares, giving the motifs a geometric character of stylization. The width of the lace trim in popular wear varied from 0,5-0,7 cm to 4,0-5,0 cm.
- in the lace decoration made with the needle in the "shabac" technique with white silk thread, the following was made: the crease, the end of the sleeve and the end of the shirt. The same lines were decorated with crocheted lace. The lace is assembled at the end of the shirt.

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